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A TRACT FOR THE TIMES

AND FOR THE CHURCHES: H418

Being the substance of a Discourse delivered at South Boston,
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Mat. 23: 23. "These ye ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

The whole verse reads thus, "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and annise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: these ye ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

It was the remark of a good and eminent man toward the close of his life, that he had lived just long enough to think nothing strange in the history of men; to regard the inconsistencies and absurdities of men, even of intelligent good men, as matters of course, as things to be expected. It is indeed humiliating to be obliged to confess, that the luminaries of the moral as well as of the natural world have their dark spots, that great and good men have their defects, their inconsistencies, their errors, their gross errors.

Luther believed in the *real presence*. Calvin did not burn Servetus, but we fear that he did not make as much effort as he ought to prevent it. Bacon has been characterized as the "wisest, brightest, *meanest* of mankind." Persecution in a former age was justified. It was thought kind to torture the body for the good of the soul. And even the history of our own pilgrim fathers is not exempt from inconsistencies and acts of violence which appropriately belonged to the dark ages. Salem witchcraft will be mentioned with a blush by every genuine son of New England to the latest time.

Sir Matthew Hale, one of the most pious men and eminent jurists of his age, believed in witches, and gave his consent to the hanging of some of the order.

It is not long since great and good men attempted to vindicate the use and traffic in ardent spirits. They themselves drank and drank, and thought well of it, and that it was no harm to make use of God's *good creatures*, as if the Devil's evil creatures were God's good creatures.

John Newton was once engaged in the slave trade, and even after his conversion to the faith and hope of the Gospel, attempted to justify it, on the ground, (if we recollect rightly,) that it was better for the African to be sold into American bondage than to remain in his own native land.

When the British Government applied to an Arab chief in Africa, with a request, that he would not be guilty of the atrocity of making white men slaves, what was his reply? Why, he refused to comply with the request, saying that the men in question were much better off in Africa than they could be in England; and added, that white men were a debased and degraded order of beings, and only fit to be slaves. Just precisely the argument employed by some thoughtless and unprincipled men, and even by not a few Southern divines, that the condition of slavery for the colored man is better than freedom.

But we trust that the period is not distant, when slave-holding will be regarded by the good sense of this nation with just as much abhorrence as the slave trade is now, which is condemned as piracy. If this period do not arrive, and something like such a change do not take place in this great Christian community, then our hopes in regard to the approaching prosperity of Zion must be utterly disappointed and fail; for the millennial day of Christ's kingdom can no more be expected, while more than two millions of human beings are in physical, mental and moral bondage in the bosom of this Christian country, than the light of a bright day can be expected without the sun.

In the words prefixed to this discourse, we have an instance recorded of the moral blindness of the Jewish teachers. "These ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone." The interpretation is this; that some duties of minor consequence they had performed, and were even scrupulous in the performance of them, while others of greater moment they had omitted. It was well that they had tithed even the small products of the earth. This the law required. But in omitting and neglecting the weightier matters of justice, mercy, sincerity and fidelity, they discovered a gross inconsistency and hypocrisy. And it was upon their hypocrisy especially, that the burden of the Saviour's rebuke fell. He calls them hypocrites, and pronounces a woe upon them. "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." Because they pretended to be very religious, performing some small duties with much scrupulosity, while they neglected those of greater importance. This, in the Saviour's view, be it remembered, was hypocrisy.

From the doctrine deduced from the passage, we are very naturally led, on the present occasion, to contemplate the inconsistency and hypocrisy of many Christian churches in this land, in laboring for the heathen abroad while they make no appropriate and corresponding efforts for the millions of heathen in the very midst of this land. And is it not plain, that if churches are thus guilty of inconsistency and hypocrisy, if they are pretending to commiserate the heathen on the other side of the globe, and putting forth efforts for their redemption, while they are neglecting judgment and mercy to the oppressed and benighted in this country, then this inconsistency and hypocrisy ought to be exposed and condemned. God sees it and condemns it, and all the nations of the earth see it and condemn it. And how must this inconsistent policy appear in view of the heathen to whom we send the Gospel? Suppose the Karens or any other converted heathen should send missionaries into our Southern States to evangelize their ignorant and heathen population? But they have just

as good right to do so, as we have to send missionaries to any other nation, and to resist unto blood any opposition that might be made to such a benevolent and worthy enterprise. The Prudential Committee of the American Board sometime since, in giving instructions to missionaries destined to foreign lands, admonished them to preach the gospel, and if resisted by "the powers that be," still to preach the gospel.

We wish it however to be distinctly understood, that in all that has been done to enlighten and evangelize the heathen of other lands, we greatly rejoice. We are happy that so much has been done and is doing to spread the knowledge of the Saviour in other countries; that so much has been done in the different departments of benevolent enterprise, with a view to advance the Redeemer's kingdom in the world. We love that charity which has a heart to commiserate the degraded, wretched mortal, though he be a dweller on the farthest nook of earth. This is the charity of the gospel. This is as it should be. This, and much more than this, the churches ought to have done; but they ought not to have left the other undone.

They ought not to pass by with priest and Levite indifference and cold-heartedness the more than two millions of their own countrymen, fallen into the hands of oppressors who have robbed them and chattelized them; oppressors who have not only imprisoned their bodies but also incarcerated their souls in mental and moral darkness and death, legally and systematically shutting them out from the light of life. They ought not to withhold their sympathy from these. They ought especially to put forth their most vigorous efforts to emancipate, enlighten, evangelize and save these their neighbors, their own countrymen.

Will you allow me to enumerate some of the reasons why we should especially labor for the deliverance and salvation of these domestic heathen.

I. *Their claims upon our sympathy and efforts are strongest, their condition being worse than that of any other heathen on the face of the globe.*

Southern ministers of the gospel, southern religious journals, and southern ecclesiastical bodies, all have testified to the fact, "that the colored population of the south are the heathen of America, and that in point of ignorance and moral degradation," said the synod of South Carolina and Georgia, "will bear comparison with the heathen in any other portion of the globe."

A writer in the Charleston Observer some years since declared, in substance, that there were a hundred thousand human beings within the bounds of that synod who knew nothing of the Christian religion, having never heard of Jesus Christ, save perhaps in the way of oaths and curses.

An article in the Western Luminary affirmed also, that the colored population in that vicinity were as deservedly objects of attention to the American Board as any other heathen either in Hindostan, China, or the South Sea Islands.

There are then more than two millions of human beings in this land, in a state of most degrading heathenism, more than two millions for whom Christ died, and to whose eyes and hearts the Bible, that record of God's mercy to dying men, is locked up, a sealed book.

Is not this the very sin for which we denounce the church of Rome, viz: that she withholds the Bible, the charter of heaven's mercy, from the people; the very sin which roused the energies and stirred the hearts of Luther and other great Reformers, whose labors to expose its enormity we are accustomed justly to applaud.

Where then is the consistency of declaiming so loudly against this ghostly and cruel despotism in the Romish church, while we seem to spare the same nefarious policy in reference to the colored population of this land; a policy most reproachful to Christians, disgraceful to our country and odious in the sight of God. Would not the Saviour frown upon us, hypocrites, that while we vote to give the Bible to the whole world, and work our steam presses in the production of hundreds of copies every day, we shamelessly withhold it

from these our own countrymen. And these heathen, be it remembered, are physically as well as mentally and morally bound, doubly degraded and heathenized.

II. *There are greater facilities for evangelizing these heathen than for evangelizing those in foreign countries.*

This appears *from their location*. They are our nearest neighbors. And the very contiguity of their situation lays us under obligation to them. They are especially our neighbors whom we are bound to love. God expects that the poor and the needy and the benighted, who, by his providence, are thrown within the particular sphere of our influence, should especially share our kindness and munificence. It is most unreasonable and cruel, amidst our benevolent enterprises in behalf of the world's population, to neglect these our oppressed and heathenized fellow men, who stand at our very doors claiming protection and deliverance and the blessings of the gospel; fellow men who are doubly oppressed, oppressed by the hand of man and by the power of Satan; twice robbed, robbed of earth and robbed of heaven.

Moreover we have no need of crossing seas, oceans and continents to reach them. In blessing with the light of life the Chinese, the Hindoos and the South Sea Islanders, we must make a voyage of six or eight months, and double those stormy Capes of Good Hope and Horn. But here these heathen are within our very borders, a dark, gloomy cloud resting down upon our beloved land, into whose benighted masses scarcely a ray from the Sun of righteousness has as yet penetrated.

Indeed we can reach them with effect by our very action on the subject. The northern churches have an influence which, if properly exerted, would tell with tremendous effect upon the destinies of these outcast heathen at the South. They hold a moral power which, if efficiently wielded, would strike the horrid system dumb and dead, and annihilate it forever from our country. Every movement of the church here vibrates, as with electricity, to the remotest corner of Georgia.

And then their language is essentially the same with ours.

The missionary who goes to a foreign country to plant the standard of the cross, must first spend months and sometimes years in learning the language, before he can tell of Jesus and his salvation. But here is no such hindrance. You may go and speak to them and tell them the wonderful works of the Lord, in your own language, wherein you and they were born, and they can ordinarily understand you.

Moreover the pacific temperament and susceptibility of these people to receive the gospel is almost proverbial. The labors of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries among the colored people in the West India Islands have always been attended with uncommon success. Faithful and well-directed efforts to enlighten, elevate and save the negro race, never fail of being attended with the happiest results.

Nor should it be forgotten, that these captive heathen are our countrymen, born upon American soil. Their fathers and mothers were stolen by our ancestors, and reduced to a miserable bondage, and these, their children, have been heathenized by the enactments of our Christian legislatures. They have toiled for American white men, until they have earned enough to purchase, many times over, the soil stained with their tears and blood.

III. *In addition to all this, it is to be remembered, painful as it may be, that we of the North are implicated in the guilt of oppressing, degrading and heathenizing them.*

For we have failed to cherish in our hearts a just abhorrence, and to express in action a proper indignation toward the sin of slave-holding. Slave-holding is odious in the sight of God, equally and more so than that of idolatry. The Scriptures are equally pointed and clear in its condemnation. Slave-holding is theft, is robbery—is the most flagrant violation of the eighth commandment that can possibly be imagined. If another take my cloak clandestinely I call him a thief. If

he take it by violence I call him a robber. But by what name shall I call him who takes by violence, not only my cloak, but myself also, soul and body, and makes me an article of property?

But who among us have shown a proper indignation toward this monstrous system of iniquity? How few hearts have burned with a becoming zeal to rescue the country from the blood-guiltiness of oppression, and to avert the judgments of a righteous Heaven? How few martyr spirits have appeared to redeem the two millions of our countrymen from the most iniquitous system of heathenism, outrage and wrong that the sun ever beheld? Our brothers, our missionaries have fallen in foreign lands, in attempting to tame the wild Battas and to Christianize the cruel Turk, but who and how many have hazarded their lives for the degraded African, oppressed and peeled by Christian hands?

It is true, indeed, that there was one noble-hearted patriot and philanthropist and Christian, who stood up in defence of the great principles of freedom, and in behalf of suffering humanity until he fell a martyr to his devotion to the cause. The name of Lovejoy is embalmed in many hearts, and will stand high on the rolls of recorded philanthropy and Christian heroism. It will become the theme of delightful retrospect to the future friends of freedom and humanity, who shall trace the history of our times and acquire a prominence on the catalogue of martyrs worthy of immortality.

But after all, I repeat the inquiry, what have we done? How have we answered the claims of these crushed, despised and disfranchised millions? Alas, alas, two centuries have rolled away, and we have hardly said, "be ye emancipated, Christianized and saved. Much less have we put forth any appropriate and truly honest efforts for their deliverance and salvation. Ten generations of heathen have gone down to death, and to the retributions of eternity, from this land, this Christian land, and we have done comparatively nothing for them.

Nay, more; we have aided and abetted this system

of iniquity and heathenism, by the laws which we have countenanced and the public sentiment which we have cherished.

There are laws in this land,—Oh, shame on our republicanism, shame on our Christianity!—there are laws in this land framed for the express purpose of keeping these heathen in ignorance, gross ignorance, perpetual ignorance, excluding them from all knowledge of letters, from all access to the word of God, and with few exceptions, from the entire blessings of the gospel.

We have abetted the system by the Christian fellowship which we have extended to those who have “decreed” unrighteous decrees, and have taken away the right from the poor of God’s people.” If we had frowned with a proper indignation, and marked with just censure those who rob the hireling of his wages, and make merchandise of men, and yet pretend to be the followers of Him who said, “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you,” our country would have been disinthrallled, and our Christianity saved from reproach. I do verily believe, that it is in the power of any one of the great Christian denominations in our land, to give the death blow to this mammoth sin of our country. If they would unitedly and perseveringly put forth their moral might, the whole unrighteous system would soon go by the board and be destroyed.

But the truth is, and cannot be disguised, that we have, in different ways connived at this most iniquitous system, so that slaveholders have felt easy and comfortable in the practice of oppression and injustice. And, my beloved hearers, will not God hold us responsible for this and for the fearful consequences?

Do not our northern men go down there, and almost at once participate in the iniquity and become the staunch advocates of the unjust system. We can recollect several, yea many young and promising men, and some associated in college life, consecrated to the work of the holy ministry, who have gone down there, married wives possessing human cattle, abandoned the ministry and become planters.

It is in vain then to say that we are not pro-slavery, when our brothers and sons, from our domestic altars, our schools and our sanctuaries of worship, go down there to the South and participate in the traffic of human flesh and blood, and we allow our regard for their feelings and their interests to blind us to a proper apprehension of their guilt, and to extinguish our sympathy for the oppressed.

It is in vain to say that we are not pro-slavery, when our public men and representatives in our halls of legislation are sustained in holding up their hands to perpetuate the foul system.

It is in vain to say that we are not pro-slavery, when the press of the land is so extensively muzzled on this subject, and dare not be the advocate of impartial liberty.

It is in vain to say that we are not pro-slavery, when the pulpit in so many instances, is pledged to an impious neutrality, and men who have vowed to declare the whole counsel of God, are found suppressing it in relation to this subject, neither declaring it themselves nor allowing others to declare it.

It is in vain to say that we are not pro-slavery when all our sympathies go out for the slaveholder, and we have but a hollow, stinted, heartless charity for the poor, suffering, heart-broken slave.

When our relatives and friends who go down there shall forbear to dip in the damning sin of slaveholding, when our Congress-men shall manifest the spirit of Wilberforce and Clarkson, when the press shall speak out on this subject, and be the unflinching advocate of justice and impartial freedom, when the pulpit, no longer embarrassed by a short-sighted and wicked expediency, shall boldly plead the cause of the oppressed, "proclaiming liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound," when our charity shall have eyes to see and a heart to feel for the miseries of the colored man; in short, when we shall rise up in our moral might to crucify this giant sin of our land, then and not till then shall we be consistent, anti-slavery, without occasion of reproach, and God

regard us with complacency as a people hating oppression and loving righteousness.

Here then are our inconsistency and hypocrisy. We have no heart in us to feel for the abused, peeled, outraged millions in our own land. The colored man, because he is colored and because we use him for mercenary purposes, we have exiled from our sympathies and our regards. We are blind to justice and deaf to the cry of the helpless. We profess to feel commiseration for the Hindoo and the Hottentot and the South-Sea Islander, and the savage in our western wilds. We seem ready to show compassion for the children of men in the moon; we are prepared to pour the light of truth upon the sons of Africa beyond the ocean, while judgment and mercy, charity and love toward the same brotherhood in our own country, we have neglected and withheld.

How is it, that as Christians we could be guilty of such inconsistency, and what the Saviour calls hypocrisy, to love a brother afar off, while we show no genuine sympathy for our brother who pleads for justice and mercy at our own doors? Why, it would seem a plain case, my hearers, that the man who pretends to be charitable, and would make God think that he is charitable, by giving to the heathen abroad, while he turns away with indifference from the claims of two millions of heathen in the very midst of us, must stand chargeable before God and man with gross inconsistency and palpable hypocrisy. Take which horn of the dilemma you may. Either abandon your romantic zeal for a distant and indistinct good, or rally to the tangible reality of giving actual relief to your poor oppressed brother, and wake up to the duty of delivering him from the cruel, physical, mental and moral bondage in which he is held.

It is unaccountable, my hearers, that we have so long slept over this subject; and in view of the fact, we are forcibly reminded of the case of good Josiah, the King; who, when he accidentally, or rather providentially, found the book of the law by which he learned

that he and his fathers had sinned, and great wrath was kindled against the nation, rent his clothes and put on sackcloth. We and our fathers have sinned, and great wrath is kindled against the nation, and we seem not hitherto to have known it, and there is great occasion for us to rend our hearts in penitence and contrition, because we and our fathers, in this thing, have sinned grievously.

It is strange indeed, that as a people we have been spared so long, when we consider how exceedingly we have sinned in this matter, and with what signal vengeance God has swept other unjust and oppressive nations. If there be any one sin which God visits with his severest displeasure, it is the sin of oppression. How has he peeled and scathed and annihilated the nations who have dared to oppress and crush the helpless and unoffending. All history teaches this fearful lesson.

Why, my hearers, we seem to have been infatuated. While the most cruel and revolting system of oppression and heathenism, a system which finds no parallel on earth, has been tolerated from generation to generation, the church have slept. But thanks to God, we are encouraged to believe that "the night is far spent and the day is at hand." The recent interest which is being cherished in this subject, and the indications of Providence, show us that the church, and the country, and the world are waking up to the great enterprise of universal emancipation.

REMARKS.

Does any one ask what is to be done, or what can we do?

1. *Consider the bad influence which you exert upon the cause of religion, while you justly lie under the charge of inconsistency and hypocrisy.*

Voltaire and Paine made infidels by their sophistical, corrupt, and infidel publications. We make them by the inconsistency, and heartlessness, and inhumanity

of our religion as it appears in its fruits. We are professedly the representatives of the Christian Religion, and unconverted men will judge of it by its fruits as exhibited in our lives. But what respect can men have for a religion which is soulless, heartless, unjust, palpably unjust, inhuman, having no bowels of compassion for the suffering and the dumb? What regard will men have for a religion which is blink-eyed and partial, can see a suffering brother afar off, but can't see one close by. Why if we fail to carry out our principles and to show, that our religion is disinterested, having a heart to feel and a spirit to act, we may expect that men will lose their confidence in us and in our religion; and Infidels, and Garrisonians, and Levelers, and Come-outers, and Fouries, and all sorts and sizes of sects and parties, of every shape and character, will multiply among us and around us. O, pity, pity, that good men should have placed themselves in such a false position before the world.

It is not to be denied, that the churches, in many instances, have, though indirectly, yet essentially promoted infidelity and heresy, by their cold, unsympathizing, inconsistent, and hypocritical bearing toward the cause of anti-slavery. Had the churches, instead of parrying the force of truth, and the calls of duty in relation to this subject, promptly yielded to the indications of Providence, showed themselves the decided friends of humanity, and occupied their appropriate place in the anti-slavery warfare, many forms of infidelity and heresy, now rife in our land, would probably never have existed. And who is so dull as not to perceive, that just occasion of reproach has been given, and, that if many individuals from the anti-slavery ranks have become ultra, and gone over to anti-sabbath, anti-ministry, and infidel positions, it is to be attributed mainly to the provoking, maddening fact, that the Gospel ministry and the churches, the accredited pioneers in works of reform, would not move, but stood still, and held back, and seemed to think it "the chief end of man to stand still and hold back." No wonder that

many whose hearts were deeply enlisted in the cause of the slave, and felt strongly that it was righteous, were provoked to madness. It was enough to make some even "wise men mad" enough "to make the stones cry out." Surely the Devil never congratulates himself more heartily upon any aspect of his affairs, than when he can enlist good men, and reputable professors of religion, and respected ministers of the Gospel, and men of high standing in church and state, to second his plans, and oppose emancipation, and undertake to hush the voice of remonstrance, and labor to patch up and smooth over, and justify the old infernal institution, or rather despotism of slavery.

2. *We must be consistent, and thus clear ourselves from the charge of inconsistency and hypocrisy.*

Let us do the one and not leave the other undone. While we labor for those, let us not neglect these. We shall not succeed with the one, if we leave the other undone. God will never suffer a slave-holding church to convert the world. That you may rely upon. Satan can't cast out Satan. It is the anti-slavery missionaries of the Sandwich Islands who have been most successful, ten-fold most successful.

3. *We must have a great deal of moral courage.*

It is only the spirit of martyrdom that can conquer in this warfare. This long standing system of iniquity, ramified and incorporated with every department of society, and grown gray in unrighteousness, is not to be demolished without protracted and persevering effort, and much hard moral combat.

4. *Identify yourselves with this enterprise.*

It is the cause of God, based upon the principles of the Bible, of eternal truth and right, and must prevail. Instead of standing aloof, and bestowing your censures, gather up to the work, and give to this worthy cause the benefit of your wisdom and experience. It is not enough for you to say, that you don't like our measures, while you make no effort to rectify them, nor do any thing for the cause in any other way. Take hold, and if you can't work with us and in our way, work in

some other way according to your liking, only so that you do work *honestly* and *faithfully*. Do you ask how? You see how we oppose intemperance and other prevailing evils. We agitate and agitate, reiterate line upon line, and precept upon precept, develope facts, and multiply arguments.

You see too how the churches are moving and rising up, and forming "holy alliances" to oppose Popery, and Puseyism, and other heresies, and all this is well, and as it should be. But is there any heresy so dangerous, so fatal, as slave-holding? There is none, there can be none so bad as that which divests man of his humanity, robs him of both earth and heaven, and incarcerates, and stultifies the souls for whom Christ died? O it is this, the toleration of this, which involves us in deepest guilt, which arrays heaven against us, which provokes the Divine vengeance, and prepares us for thunderbolts red with no common wrath.

Great alarm is felt and expressed through the land, on account of the aggressive movements of Popery. Our young men of pilgrim descent become papists, and enter Roman seminaries to become papal priests, and it is all bad enough, most painful, most to be regretted we allow. But Romanism is not so flagrantly wicked as slave-holding. I would sooner admit a papal priest to my pulpit, than a slave-holding minister, though of my own denomination. There is nothing in atrocity like palpable injustice, and theft, and robbery, however in accordance with custom, or sanctioned by legislative enactment; and yet multitudes of our citizens and our sons, through preceding years, have become slaveholders, extortioners of the worst stamp, men-stealers, but who, how many of the professed servants of God have wept between the "porch and the altar," and put on sackcloth and ashes, and mourned as when our children become papists. "This ye ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

5. *We remark once more. You say that you can't act in this behalf, that the laws of the land prevent.*

But who made the laws? I need not answer; you

know very well that you, the sovereign people, make the laws, and if you have given your influence and your vote to make such iniquitous laws, then I say to you, go to work and unmake them. Put such men in office as will annul and abolish them. True, it is not our appropriate business, nor our purpose, as ministers of the Gospel, to preach *party politics*. The pulpit is not consecrated to Cæsar. Questions of state policy and political economy, belong more appropriately to the discussions of the Legislative Hall, and the Senate Chamber. And yet we are "to render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, as well as unto God the things which are God's." As the servants of God, bound to declare his whole counsel, it is incumbent on us, to lay down and expound the great principles which should govern human action in every department of life, political as well as religious. There is, or ought to be, as much conscience connected with the ballot-box, as with the domestic altar, the sanctuary, or any business of life, and accordingly we urge upon you the duty of exercising the right of suffrage conscientiously, of choosing such men for your rulers, as will rule in the fear of "Him by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice;" such men as "shall be a terror, not to good works, but to evil;" such men as "shall execute judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, and do no wrong;" such men as shall loose the bands of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke!

All this you are bound to do by the love of God, and the sanctions of the Gospel.

I have only to say, for your influence in all and every department of life, whether rightly or wrongly exerted, you must give account unto God. Let then your hands as well as your heart go for the slave, lest he rise up in judgment to condemn you for your inconsistency and hypocrisy in professing to commiserate him, while you did not the things calculated to accomplish his deliverance. As you hope to find mercy, show mercy, for "he that stoppeth his ear at the cry of the poor and needy, shall himself cry and not be heard." Amen.